

1507

The Superintendency of Divine Providence over Humane Affairs.

A  
**S E R M O N**  
Preach'd before  
The Right Honourable the  
**LORD-MAYOR,**  
Aldermen, and Liverymen  
Of the several Companies  
Of the City of *London*,  
At the Cathedral Church of St. Paul,  
On Tuesday, May 29, 1705.

Being the Anniversary of the Restoration of  
King *Charles II.* and the Royal Family.

By FRANCIS FOX, M. A. Chaplian to his Lordship.

L O N D O N,  
Printed by J. Downing for Richard Burroughs at the Sun  
and Half-Moon in Cornhill near the Exchange, 1705.

The Subscribers of Dunc's Books  
have given Allotments

# S E R Y M O N

Second Part

Lord-Mayor

Allegory and Lecture



of the

French Poets

London May 25, 1702.

Given by Anniversity to the Refectorial  
Poetry Society of the Royal Society.

A. FRANCIS FOX, W. A. Copekin to the Library

London

Brought for Binding for Sir John Suckling in the year  
one thousand seven hundred and twenty two

MY LORD

To Right Honourable  
Sir Owen Buckingham, Kt.  
Lord-Mayor of the City of London;

And to the

Lord Mayor

## Court of ALDERMEN.

Right Honourable,

It is in Obedience to the Order of your Honourable Court that this Sermon appears in publick. Discourses on the Divine Providence are never out of Season, but they are more especially seasonable at a Time when the greatest Part of Christendom are engaged in War. Were the Management of my Subject equal to the Weight and Importance of it, I could not doubt of its being well received. Such as it is I present it to you, believing that your Candour will easily encline you to overlook its Imperfections.

My

The Dedication.

My LORD,

I cannot omit this Opportunity of  
making my thankfull Acknowledgments  
to your Lordship for the many Favours  
conferr'd upon,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble & obedient

Servant & Chaplain

Francis Fox.

ERRATA.

Page 8, l. 16, read 3. p. 20, read may they.

A

I

# A S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the  
**L O R D - M A Y O R, &c.**

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Psal. XCVII. part of the first Verse.

*The Lord Reigneth, let the Earth  
rejoice.*

**T**H E Occasion of our coming together at this time is too well known to stand in need of a Relation in this Honourable Assembly. I need not therefore tell you, that we are this Day called upon by Authority to commemorate the great Mercy of God to these Nations, in putting an end to an unnatural, civil, and intestine War, (which had almost spent and exhausted the *Blood* and *Spirits* of our excellent and admirable Constitution) by bringing home the rightful Heir of these Kingdoms to sit upon the Throne, and inherit the Crown of his Fathers, restoring with him our ancient Government in Church and State. I need not tell you, that this was effected and

B brought

## A Sermon Preach'd

brought about in such a marvellous manner, attended with such unusual Circumstances, (for not a Sword was drawn, nor a drop of Blood spilt) as evidently demonstrate it to have been the mighty Work of God, and therefore to be had in Remembrance, and celebrated with Praise and Thanksgiving.

*The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.* As if it had been said; Tho' the All-wise Creator and Sovereign Disposer of all things, in the ordinary Course of his Providence, makes use of second Causes to bring his Designs and Purposes about; yet he keeps the Reins of Government in his own Hands, and consequently can, and does whenever He pleases, suspend and controul them, and make them subservient to his own Will and Pleasure, contrary even to their natural tendency, and their usual ways of acting. And this is just matter of rejoicing, not only to those that by virtue of a particular Covenant are in League and Friendship with Him, but to the Inhabitants of the whole Earth.

From the Words we may raise these two Observations, proper for the Entertainment of our Minds on this joyful Solemnity.

*First,* That the Divine Providence superintends, manages and governs the Affairs of the World.

*Secondly,* That this is matter of great Joy to the Inhabitants of the Earth.

After

After I have gone over these Observations, I shall conclude with some suitable Reflections.

First, That the Divine Providence superintends, manages and governs the Affairs of the World. By the Providence of God, we understand his continual Care in sustaining, preserving, upholding, and governing the World, and all things that are therein, which is more particularly extended to Mankind. Were this withheld all things must return to their first nothing, i. e. cease to have any longer an Existence or Being in the World. Now that there is such a Providence we are assured,

1. From the universal Testimony and Consent of all Mankind.

2. Our own Reason and Observation will teach us it.

3. We may infer it from the natural Notions and Apprehensions that we have of God.

Lastly, From the authentick and undoubted Testimony of God himself in Holy Scripture, which in a Christian Assembly will undoubtedly pass for the highest Evidence and Demonstration.

1. We are assured that the Providence of God governs the World from the universal Testimony and Consent of all Mankind. It will not be amiss here to premise how much light

this gives to the Doctrine I am proving. The Philosopher long since observ'd, that there are four degrees of Probability. The Opinion of *some Wise Men* render a thing somewhat probable; the Opinion of *most Wise Men* render it more probable; the Opinion of *most Men*, both wise and unwise, render it yet further probable; and lastly, the Opinion of *all Men* concerning any matter makes it probable in the highest degree.

Now that there is this universal Testimony and Consent of all Mankind concerning God's Governing the World by his Providence will appear from hence; because there is no Nation or People from one end of the Earth unto the other, but at the return of some stated times perform Acts of Religious Worship; which wou'd not be universally practised, were it not as universally believed that the Providence of God governs the World, and that He is both able and willing to help and defend them; for to what purpose shou'd Men worship God, offer up Prayers, or make Supplications to Him, but from such a Belief? To what purpose shou'd they deprecate him to avert an impending Danger, or supplicate to be delivered out of any Trouble or Calamity that is fallen upon them, but from a Perswasion of his Readiness and Ability

lity to protect and succour them? Does not the Return of Praise necessarily imply a Belief that he is the Author and Giver of all Good?

I know some modern Writers of Travels have given an Account that there are People that have no Notion either of a God or his Providence: But this Testimony of theirs is liable to many Exceptions; for not to insist at present, that it is very hard and difficult to conceive that there should be Laws, and Government, and Society, without the Belief of a Supream Being, the Stay of these Relators in those Places was but short, and the Language of the Country not at all, at least but imperfectly, understood by them, and consequently their Intercourse and Conversation was but imperfect: and therefore it is possible that the Inhabitants of those Countries have some Knowledge of, and pay some Worship and Homage to God, tho' not observed by them.

But admitting that this were true, it does not seem to affect the Argument I am urging for the proof of a Providence; for it is abundantly enough if the Belief of it is generally received and embraced. It proves indeed, that it is possible for Mankind so far to degenerate, so far to be blinded, and led Captive by their sinful Lusts and Passions, that they, who by their wise Creator were made little lower than the Angels,

may

may by degrees become little, if at all, superiour in Knowledge to the Beasts.

It would be endless to cite all the Passages out of Heathen Authors to this purpose: I will therefore content my self with one or two. *To what purpose (saies Antoninus) do I live in a World destitute of God, and destitute of Providence?* But there is a God, and He takes care of humane Affairs. Cicero not only asserts that the Providence of God governs the World; but proves it from the Consideration of his excellent Nature. There is nothing (saies he) more Excellent than God, therefore the World must of Necessity be governed by him. And again. Those that grant that there is a God, must confess that he is employ'd about something that is Noble and Excellent; but there is nothing more Noble and Excellent than the Government of the World; therefore the World is governed by his Counsel. This was not only his Reasoning, but likewise the Reasoning of several other Heathen Philosophers.

2. Our own Reason and Observation will teach us that there is a Providence: For the same Arguments that prove the being of God necessarily infer a Providence, the one being a natural and necessary consequence from the other; for if the Beauty and Order, the Variety and Usefulness, and Aptitude of the several Parts of the visible World

World prove that they were made and contrived by some wise and all-powerful Being; then the continuance of 'em in the same State of Beauty, Order, and Comeliness, the return of the Seasons depending upon the constant Motions of the Heavens, and the regular Production of Plants, and Animals therein, will prove that they are upheld, directed and governed by the same infinite Power and all-wise Counsel.

Do we not plainly see, that not only Creatures endued with Reason and Understanding, but even those that are destitute and void of Life and Sense, are directed and carried on to ends, which of themselves they can neither desire nor obtain? For Example; Trees and Plants grow, and flourish, increase in Height and Dimension, receive Nourishment from the Earth, which is distributed through small and little Channels into all the extreme Parts: So that from a little Seed, or Kernel, arises a tender Plant, thence a little Tree, thence it advances to greater Perfection, bears Fruit, and produces its own Seed again. Let a Man reflect and reason with himself, and he will not, nay he cannot conclude that this comes to pass without the Direction and Appointment of the Creator and Governour of the Universe. Let a Man reflect and reason with himself, and tell me how much he adds to his own Growth and Stature?

To

To say that this is done by Chance, is ridiculous and absurd: For Chance acts by no Rule at all; and therefore its Operations are uncertain: How then can Chance give Laws to Nature, which is uniform and regular in all its Operations? One may as well affirm that a blind Man, or one that shoots at Rovers, may hit a Mark ten thousand times successively.

Do not brute Creatures provide for, and take care of their Young? And shall we, can we believe that the Authour of Nature, the Creator of the Universe, is regardless of the things which He has made, in the forming of which He has demonstrated so much Wisdom, Power, and Goodness?

2. We may infer a Providence from the natural Notions and Apprehensions that we have of God. Every one that conceives aright of the Divine Majesty, conceives Him to be a Being endued with all possible Perfections, Infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. He that thinks otherwise of the Creator and Governour of the World, does not entertain Thoughts worthy of Him. Every one that denies a Providence, robs God of all those Perfections that make Him to be God, or supposes such Qualities in Him as are utterly inconsistent with his excellent Nature; namely, that He is an idle,

restive

restive, and unactive Being. What can be more senseless and irrational than to imagine, that Infinite Power shou'd be doing nothing, Infinite Wisdom contriving and ordering nothing, and Infinite Goodness doing no good? Can any thing be too high or great for Infinite Power to rule and govern? Or can any Creature be so low and inconsiderable as to be beneath the Care of the Universal Father of the World? Or can any thing be too perplex'd and intricate for Infinite Wisdom to unfold and discover?

Either God cannot take notice how things are managed in the World, and consequently is not infinitely wise; or He does, and can take notice of them, but cannot order and govern them, and so is not infinitely powerful; or, 3dly, He does observe and see them, is able to prevent, hinder, and controul them, but will not manifest his Wisdom, nor exert his Power, and consequently He is not infinitely good. So that you see there is such a close and necessary connection between the Nature and Providence of God, that the one necessarily supposes and infers the other.

Lastly, We are assured from the authentick and undoubted Testimony of God himself in Holy Scripture, that by his Providence He superintends, manages and governs the Affairs of

the World, which in a Christian Assembly will undoubtedly pass for the highest Evidence and Demonstration; for we may be as certain of the Truth of that which is contain'd in that Divine Book, as we can be of any thing for which we have the Testimony of our Senses; because its Certainty depends upon the Truth and Veracity of God. There we are told, that

**Dan. 14. 7.** *the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men,* and disposeth of all their Affairs. That there is no Evil happens in a City, i. e. no Calamity or Punishment for Sin, but the Lord doth it. The Historical part of the Old Testament abounds with Instances of the Providence of God. And our Lord in the New is so particular in this matter,

**Mat. 10. 29.** as to assure us, that even a Sparrow (of which

**Luke 12. 6, 7.** <sup>30.</sup> five are sold for two Farthings) does not fall to the Ground without the Knowledge of his Heavenly Father; much less then does any thing befall Him, but by the same Divine Knowledge and Permission, who is of more Value than many Sparrows. Nay, the very Hairs of our Heads are all numbred; so tender a Care has the Creator of the World for the Works of his Hands.

I might further alledge for the Proof of this comfortable Doctrine, the Judgments, Mercies, and Deliverances of God, many of which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and in Heathen.

then Authors, the certain Predictions of Events, several hundred Years before they came to pass, the Miracles that have been wrought from the Creation of the World; but I have not time to enlarge.

I will shut up this Head with an Observation that silences all the Cavils and Objections that are made against the Providence of God; namely, such as are taken from the Sufferings of good Men, and the Prosperity of the Wicked, the Permission of Evil in the World, &c. The Observation is this, That at present we neither have, nor can have a full Comprehension of God's Government from the beginning to the end. We see but a Part of his Works, and are ignorant of many things, the Knowledge of which is absolutely necessary to our making a right Judgment of the Reasons of Providence: and therefore we neither can, nor ought to conclude against it upon these Accounts. And I do not in the least question, but that when we come to have a full View at the last Day of all the several Dealings of God with Mankind, we shall have the highest Reason to conclude with the Psalmist, *The Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works.* I come now to the

Pf. 145. 17.

Second Observation arising from the Words of my Text ; namely, to shew that this Consideration, That the Divine Providence superintends, manages, and governs the Affairs of the World, is matter of great Joy to the Inhabitants of it. And that upon these two Accounts.

1st, Because they are certain that He governs it according to the exact Rules of Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness.

2dly, Because their Safety and Security is best promoted and provided for thereby.

First, I say that the Children of Men have great Reason to rejoice on the Account that Almighty God governs the World, because they are certain that He governs it according to the exact Rules of Justice, Wisdom and Goodness. It is true He is absolute Lord and Sovereign of the whole Creation, that he does what he pleases in the Armies of Heaven, and among all the Inhabitants of the Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places, and none can say unto him, What doest thou ? But there is nothing to be feared from absolute Power, joined with infinite Wisdom and Goodness. No Inconvenience can come from God's being King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Such are the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature, that it is impossible that the Power that is essential to it shou'd be employed to the

the Hurt and Damage of those that are subject thereunto. It is impossible that his Wisdom shou'd not see and discern what is best and fittest to be done, which when it is seen and known, his Goodness will undoubtedly put him upon the Execution of it. We must not judge of the absolute Power of God, by the evil Effects of what we call absolute Power in the Princes and Great Men of the World; because God is infinitely removed from all those Defects and Imperfections that are always seen in them. Here indeed Men are governed by Humour, Prejudice, and Passion, which the Governour of the World neither is led, nor is it possible that he shou'd be. And the Truth is, it is the Defect of Power, not the absolute Possession of it, that is the Cause of Injury and Injustice.

We may always experience this in our selves, and observe it in others, namely, that the higher and taller we grow in Wisdom and Righteousness, the greater Regard and Veneration we pay to the eternal Laws of right Reason, and the less liable are we to be hurried away by our own foolish and blind Passions. And if Wisdom, Righteousness and Goodness make such sensible Alterations in Men for the better, what Apprehensions can be too great, what Opinions too high?

high for us to entertain of the Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness of God in the Government of the World, in whom these Perfections are infinite? Has not the Earth therefore, and all the Inhabitants of it, the greatest Reason to rejoice that themselves and all their Affairs are under the Direction and Influence of such a Governour as this? A Governour that cannot but execute what is just and right, and fit to be done. *For God is righteous in all Ways, and holy in all his Works. He loveth Righteousness and Judgment, and the Earth is full of the loving Kindness of the Lord; his tender Mercies are over all his Works.*

Secondly, The Inhabitants of the Earth have Reason to rejoice, that themselves and all their Affairs are under the Direction and Conduct of God's good Providence; for hereby their Safety and Security is best promoted and provided for. Every single and individual Man and Woman is safe under, and unsafe without the Providence of God, in whatsoever Capacity they consider themselves. Shou'd we attempt to recount the Miseries and Dangers we should be exposed to, were the Protection of the Almighty with-held from us and denied to us, we shou'd be at a loss both to know where to begin and where to end the Computation.

Con-

Consider we our selves as Members of the visible Church: Who but God can hinder the Gates of Hell from prevailing against us? If we consider our selves in our Political Capacity, as Members of a Society, united together by the same Laws and under the same Government, that of the Psalmist, tho' spoken of a City, may as truly be affirmed of any Nation or People, *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain.* Who can preserve and defend us from Famine and Pestilence, from Storm, Tempests, and Inundations, but He who commands the Wind and the Sea, and they obey him, and who saith to the proud Waves, hitherto shall ye go, and no further? Who but God can give Victory and Success in time of War? How easie is it now for him to strike Teravour into, and discomfit either our own or our Enemies Forces, causing them to hear the Noise of Chariots 2 Kings 7.6] and the Noise of Horses, and of a very great Multitude? Who is it that in Times of Danger and Distress, raises up Princes and Great Men, inspires them with Wisdom, and Conduct, and Courage, and makes 'em eminent Deliverers and universal Benefactors to any Nation or People? Who is it preserves them, when raised up, from secret Plots and open Conspiracies, stills the raging of the Multitude, and the Mad-

ness,

ness of the People? not their Sword, nor Scepter, nor any other Ensigns of Majesty, but the All-seeing and watchful Eye of God over them. The wisest Projects, and best laid Designs must fail and come to nought unless they are prospered with his Blessing. To how may thousand Evils and Dangers are we continually exposed, from which our own Skill and Fore-sight cannot set us free? How many Deliverances have we all from God, which escape our Knowledge? What a desolate Wilderness and ruinous Heap wou'd this World be, what Horror and Confusion wou'd soon over-spread the Face of it, shou'd God withdraw his Providence, and leave us to our selves? So that our Safety and Security, the Success and Prosperity of our private and publick Affairs depend entirely upon Him.

The Earth therefore, and all the Inhabitants of it, have just Matter to joy and triumph from this Consideration, *That the Lord Reigns*, that he by his Providence superintends over, manages, and governs all things here below. *Lord, what is Man that thou art thus mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou hast such a Regard unto him!* Happy Man whose Affairs are under the Influence and Direction of that Being, at whose Command are all the Powers of Nature, and all the Powers of Man too!

Let those then that are persecuted and afflicted for Righteousness sake, look up to God for Deliverance out of all their Trials and Troubles, considering the End and Design of God therein.

Let the Fatherless and Widow, the Poor and the Oppressed, have recourse to him, who feedeth the young Ravens that call upon him. Let the Sick and the Afflicted go to him who does not afflict willingly nor grieve the Children of Men.

Let the Soul that is grievously tempted and assaulted by the Devil, take Courage, and manfully resist his Temptations; since the Power of God is greater than the Power of the Devil; and his Goodness will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the Temptation also make us a way to escape.

Finally, Let every one place his Trust and Confidence in God, and take up the Words of the Prophet *Habbakkuk*, Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yeild no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

But are all equally under the Care and Protection of God? No. All do in some measure partake of the Benefits of his Government.

The most profligate and wicked receive Life and Breath from him, and many other Enjoyments. But none, none but the good and virtuous can with Comfort depend upon the Providence of God. The wicked and ungodly have more Reason to fear than rejoice that God governs the World; for the same Attributes of Justice and Goodness that oblige God to protect, defend, and deliver the Innocent, do oblige him to correct, punish, and afflict the Guilty. *He will walk contrary to those that walk contrary to him,* and his Vengeance, if Repentance and Reformation do not put a Stop to it, will one time or other find them out. Those and those only that keep his Covenant and think upon his Commandments to do them, have a just Claim to his Protection. The Holy Scriptures contain Threatnings as well as Promises, and the wicked and prophane have as much Reason to fear and dread the former, as the just and upright have to hope and trust in the latter.

And ought not this Consideration to put us all upon making a particular Examination into our own Hearts and Consciences, upon making a strict Scrutiny into our Lives, that we may know for certain whether we are of the Number of those that can with Comfort depend upon the Providence of God, that we may know whether it watches for Good over

us? And if upon Enquiry we find that the Case is otherwise with us, what Resolutions ought it to inspire us with to change the Course and Method of our Living? For who can express to the Life the miserable and wretched State of that Man that is without God in the World, without his Blessing and Direction, who has no just Ground to hope that he is under the immediate Care of the Creator and Redeemer of Mankind?

Ought it not, Secondly, to put those that are entrusted with the Sword of Magistracy to reflect on the State and Condition of the Nation God-ward, and to exert their Power and Authority in Rewarding Virtue and punishing Vice? For Woe be to that Nation that has God for its Enemy. All good Men lament and bewail the visible Declension of Truth and Honesty, of Piety and Virtue amongst us, and the visible Growth and Increase of Leudness and Debau-chery, both in Principles and Manners. What shall we say to the horrid Oaths, and wicked Curses that so often grate our Ears both in private Conversation and as we pass the Streets? Is not the Day appointed for the publick Worship and Service of God, to the Scandal of the Protestant Religion, in opposition to the Laws of Church and State, openly prophan'd? What else is the carrying of Burdens, the exposing

publickly of Goods to Sale, and the common  
Resort to publick Houses thereupon? What  
shall we say of those Works of the Flesh, the  
Filthinesses and Impurities that are done in se-  
cret, which as the Apostle observes, *Eph. 5.* It  
is even a shame to speak of?

It concerns us all to lend an helping hand  
for the Suppression of these enormous Crimes.  
And blessed be God, there are some that are  
willing to go thro' evil Report as well as good  
Report on this account! May their Numbers  
daily increase, and they may receive all fitting  
Encouragement from those that are in Authori-  
ty; for I see no reason why they that give In-  
formations of the Breach of those Laws which  
have an immediate Relation to the Honour of  
God, shou'd not be equally (not to say more)  
encouraged, as those that appear against the In-  
vaders of our Civil Rights and Liberties; ex-  
cept any will be so hardy as to affirm, that our  
Civil Rights and Liberties ought to be more  
dear and valuable to us, than a due Regard  
to Religion and the Honour of God. 'Tis a  
Duty incumbent upon the honourable Magi-  
strates of this great and flourishing City to take  
Care of the moral Behaviour as well as civil  
Rights of its Inhabitants, as they would avoid  
being Partakers of other Mens Sins. National  
Sins

Sins call for national Judgments, because (as it is generally, and I think truly observed) this Life is the only time of punishing Civil Societies and Combinations of Men; for in the other World all Civil Relations will cease. Every particular Man must then give an Account of his own Works. By national Sins, I understand not only Sins that are generally predominant, but are withall openly committed, and but seldom punish'd.

The Scripture clearly intimates, that God has determined a time to which, and beyond which he will not spare a sinful and rebellious Nation. The old World had an hundred and twenty Years allow'd them by God for their Repentance, which being neglected by them, the Flood came and destroyed them. And it is very observable that the Reason given to *Abraham* why his Posterity shou'd not inherit the Land of the *Amorites*, till the fourth Generation was, because *the Iniquity of that People was not then full.* Gen. 15, 16.

Almighty God has already dealt with us both in Judgment and in Mercy. And oh! that we may be awakened to a Sense of our Duty, *that so Iniquity may not be our Ruine!*

We are now assembled before him to praise his Holy Name for one of his merciful Dispensations.

pen-sa-tions to this Church and Nation. The Deliverance which was as on this Day compleated, seemst to have been as great as ever God's mighty Hand and out-stretched Arm wrought for any People under Heaven, considered in their civil Capacity. If we call to mind the Banishment of the Royal Family, the general Aversion the Nation expreſ'd to its Restoration, and yet notwithstanding how easily it was effected, without War and Bloodshed, how suddenly the Inclinations of the People were changed with Respect to the King, we cannot but discern in it such a wonderful Train of Provi-dences as is hardly to be met with in any *Hi-story*. This was then the general Sense of the Nation, as the Preamble to the Act of Parliament which appoints this Day for a perpetual Anniversary *Thanksgiving* shows, which runs thus : " Forasmuch as Almighty God, the King " of Kings, and sole Disposer of all earthly " Crowns and Kingdoms, hath by his all-sway- " ing Providence and Power miraculously de- " monstrated, in the View of all the World, &c. And then follows an Account of the Restora-tion.

And I doubt not but we shall all be sensible that we have great Reason to Bleſs and Praise Almighty God for his Goodness to us herein, if we consider,

*First,*

First, That the Restoration of the King put a Period to the miserable Destructions and Confusions of the Civil War; a War that had shed the Blood of so many brave and valiant English Soldiers. The Effects of all War are sad, ruinous, and destructive, but those of Civil War, of War commenced among People of the same Country and Nation, that besides the common Obligations of Humanity, are under mutual Ties and Obligations to support and defend each other; the Effects, I say, of such a War are much more ruinous and destructive. This is that wretched and calamitous Condition that we were this Day delivered from.

Secondly, The ancient and excellent Constitution of our Government in Church and State were together with the King restored. It is needless to run a Parallel between our own Monarchy and those abroad, or to compare it with any other Forms of Government to make you thankful for the Blessings of this Day. Tis a Government wherein the Prerogative of the Prince and the Liberty of the Subject are equally secured; a Government, under which we enjoy many, very many Spiritual and Temporal Advantages.

The Government of our Church, as established by Law, comes nearest to that of the Primitive

mitive and Apostolical; and was restor'd to us with the Royal Family, which on this Day ought to heighten our Praises and enlarge our Thanksgivings; a Church, whose Doctrine is pure and uncorrupt; for the Holy Scriptures, not the Traditions of Men, are the Rule of Her Faith; so that (as one of her Articles expresses it) *whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation;* A Church, whose Principles are peaceable and charitable, that offers no Violence to the Consciences of Men; A Church, whose Liturgy is pious and devout, plain and useful, full and substantial, such as tends to the Edification of her Members, and the building of them up in their most holy Faith; A Church, whose Ceremonies are few, useful, and significant, and agreeable to the general Rules of Scripture. In fine, a Church, that is a Terror to *Rome*, and the Defence and Bulwark of the Protestant Cause and Religion.

All that wish well to our *Sion*, mourn and grieve for the Divisions in such a Church as this. May Almighty God pour out a Spirit of Love and Unity amongst us, disposing us to pursue such Methods as may tend to the settling

Settlement of this Church upon a lasting and immovable Foundation.

Thirdly, We have Reason to bless and praise Almighty God for restoring to our Nation, as on this Day, the Royal Family; for it is to the Restoration that we owe the Blessings of the late and of the present Reign too. The late King of glorious Memory, who under God delivered us out of the Hands of our Enemies of the Church of Rome, and did so many other great Things for us, descended from the same Royal Stock, and so did our present most Gracious Queen, who is the Joy and Delight of her People.

Since therefore such great Blessings are derived to us by the Restoration; let us praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he hath done for us the Children of Men; let us offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and tell of his Works with Gladness; let us praise him in the Congregation from the Ground of the Heart.

To draw towards a Conclusion. Let us pray to God for the Continuance of these Blessings, That he would long preserve the Life of our most Gracious Sovereign, direct her Counsels, and prosper her Endeavours to promote Peace and Unity, Piety and Religion among her Subjects.

Let us lay aside our unreasonable Heats and Animosities, our particular Piques and Quarrels, and that unaccountable and pernicious Humour of dividing into Sides and Parties, to the manifest Prejudice of all our common Interests. Let us follow all those things which make for Peace; for hereby we shall baffle and defeat the Designs of our Enemies, who despair of ever making us a Prey, except by our own Divisions; these, if a Stop be not put to them, may subject our Bodies and Estates, our Souls and Consciences; the former to Tyranny and Arbitrary Power, the latter to Romish Superstition and Idolatry.

Finally, Let us all adhere faithfully to the present Establishment in Church and State, honouring them by our *Actions* as well as by our *Words*, endeavouring, according to our several Abilities and Circumstances, to reform what is amiss, that so we may become an *Holy Nation, a peculiar People Zealous of good Works.*

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